UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social
Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/C.12/1990/SR.3
23 January 1990

Original: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE ON ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Fourth session

SUMMARY RECORD OF THE 3rd MEETING

Held at the Palais des Nations, Geneva,
on Tuesday, 16 January 1990, at 3 p.m.

Chairman: Mr. BADAWI EL SHEIKH

CONTENTS

Consideration of reports:

(a) Reports submitted by States parties in accordance with articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant (continued)

Cyprus (continued)

Organization of work (continued)

This record is subject to correction.

Corrections should be submitted in one of the working languages. They should be set forth in a memorandum and also incorporated in a copy of the record. They should be sent within one week of the date of this document to the Official Records Editing Section, room E.4108, Palais des Nations, Geneva.

Any corrections to the records of the meetings of the Committee at this session will be consolidated in a single corrigendum, to be issued shortly after the end of the session.

GE.90-15177/1449B

best copy available

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS (agenda item 6)

(a) REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES IN ACCORDANCE WITH ARTICLES 16 AND 17 OF THE COVENANT (continued)

Cyprus (E/1986/4/Add.2 and 26) (continued)

1. The CHAIRMAN invited the Cypriot delegation to reply to the additional questions and comments regarding its reports put forward at the previous meeting.

2. Mr. ANASTASIADES (Cyprus) said that, ever since the establishment of the Republic of Cyprus, its Government had sought international, regional and bilateral co-operation in the social, economic and cultural fields. In formulating policies and programmes in those fields, the Government had established and operated tripartite machinery for provision of advice before final decisions were taken. To achieve better co-ordination and implementation of international and regional programmes, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs acted as central agency, except in the case of issues relating to the ILO, for which the Minister of Labour and Social Insurance was co-ordinator. Experience had shown that those measures contributed to the achievement of national policies and targets.

3. Mrs. SAMOUEL (Cyprus) said that, as officials of the Ministry of Labour, she and Mr. Anastasiades, did not have the requisite expertise to provide immediate and full oral replies to all the questions put. Any questions not answered orally during the meeting would receive comprehensive written replies at a later date.

4. In reply to the comment made by the representative of the ILO, she agreed that Cyprus could now consider ratifying Convention No. 103, and said that it intended to do so, after consulting other government services involved, such as the Ministry of Health, as well as its social partners. With regard to Convention No. 123, the minimum age fixed when ratifying the Convention had been 16. She pointed out that, since Cyprus had abolished underground work altogether, there was no need to keep records on juveniles engaged in such work.

5. Regarding the maternity grant, it was true that the grant was not paid to men; however, it was paid on the basis of either the woman's or the man's insurance, and thus constituted a family benefit. When the time came to review the relevant legislation, account would be taken of the comment made, and the possibility would be considered of extending the benefit to men.

6. On the question of abortion, termination of pregnancy had been made legal in the case of rape, in the wake of the Turkish invasion. She stressed that abortion was never compulsory, and that the decision on whether to abort was always left to the mother.

7. Regarding malnutrition, she had no statistics at her disposal, but it was her understanding that Cypriots were, if anything, overfed rather than undernourished. There was a high incidence of cardiovascular disease, and

studies would be undertaken to ascertain whether that incidence was attributable to diet. With regard to daily calorie intake, she quoted a figure of 3,000 per inhabitant, but wished to confirm its accuracy in writing at a later date.

8. In reply to the question on AIDS, she said that four persons had died from the disease, four were suffering from it, and there were 40 carriers. Measures taken by the Ministry of Health to control the disease included HIV screening for blood donors and other risk groups, making AIDS a notifiable disease, strengthening the health education campaign, expanding and further strengthening confidential counselling services for those at risk, and giving the widest possible publicity to the disease. She referred to a recent television appearance by the mother of a young victim, which had had a considerable impact and had helped reduce discrimination against AIDS sufferers.

9. Regarding contributions to the social security scheme, the total contribution was 15.5 per cent. In the case of employed persons, 6 per cent was paid by the employee, 6 per cent by the employer, and 3.5 per cent by the Government. Self-employed persons paid 11 per cent, the balance being met by the Government.

10. Life expectancy at birth was 73.90 years for men and 77.82 years for women; at the age of 30, it was 45.97 years for men and 49.18 years for women. For information, life expectancy at age 65 was 15.82 years for men and 17.02 years for women.

11. Statistics on marriage and per capita income had been requested. The marriage rate was 7.0 per thousand population, and the divorce rate 0.56 per thousand population. Per capita income was $7,700 per annum.

12. In reply to the question whether any disparity existed between the standard of health services offered in the private and public sectors, she said that there was a uniformity of standards and that both sectors were open to all citizens. Because of the capital investment required, the public sector was actually more advanced in certain fields, such as cancer treatment, kidney transplants and neurosurgery.

13. Drugs were a practically non-existent problem in Cyprus. However, measures were being taken to provide information to families, schools and risk groups, particularly the army.

14. In reply to the question whether there had been complaints by any group of the population regarding discrimination in the field of housing, she said that, while the Turkish Cypriots evicted from their lawful homes in the Government-controlled area had been readily and adequately housed in the former homes of evicted Greek Cypriots on their arrival in the occupied north, the same was not true of Greek Cypriot refugees. The latter had been found homes, but their present housing was not up to the standard they had enjoyed before being driven from the north. There were also Greek Cypriots in low-income groups who did not enjoy an adequate standard of housing. Measures would be taken to remedy that situation.

READEX FICHE

15. Regarding the rights of relevance to the Committee which were guaranteed by the Cypriot Constitution, and the remedies that existed for their enforcement, the most important rights safeguarded were: the right to a decent living and social security, freedom to work and trade in business, freedom to contract, freedom to form and join trade unions, and the right to strike. The Constitution defined those rights in clear language, and also provided effective remedies for their enforcement. If a person's fundamental rights were violated by any administrative act or omission, under article 29 of the Constitution that person could apply to the administrative authority for redress. If he did not obtain satisfaction, he could have recourse to the High Court and request the annulment of such act as being contrary to the provisions of the Constitution or of any law, or as performed in excess or abuse of power. The High Court might declare such act null and void, or declare that such omission should have been performed. Furthermore, the person aggrieved might resort to the High Court for any of the prerogative orders of mandamus or quo warranto. If aggrieved by a judicial act, he might appeal to the High Court and apply for an order of certiorari or prohibition.

16. Under article 169 of the Constitution, international instruments ratified by the Government of Cyprus had the force of law and took precedence over any municipal law.

17. One member of the Committee had asked whether the concept of a poverty line existed in Cyprus and, if so, how many persons fell below it and how they were assisted. A study carried out three years previously had established the basic needs of citizens, which were defined in the public assistance legislation. Any person, whether or not a Cypriot citizen, whose income and other resources were not sufficient to cover his basic needs had a legal right to public assistance.

18. With respect to minimum pensions, she said that the minimum pension was not a guaranteed minimum income. Minimum pensions had been introduced in the light of the country's socio-economic conditions and having regard to the financial situation of the social insurance fund, for pensioners whose pensions were substantially lower because of reduced contributions.

19. In response to the question regarding the difference between the child-care services offered to working parents in rural and urban areas, she said that the disparity was attributable to the fact that women in towns had entered the labour force earlier than those in rural areas. Now that more women in rural areas were entering the labour market, measures would be taken to create additional day-care services in areas where they were needed.

20. With regard to persons over the age of 65, the total figure was 69,500, of whom 37,500 were women and 32,000 men. That figure represented 10 per cent of the total population.

21. In reply to the question on the number of unmarried couples in Cyprus and whether a study of such persons had been carried out, she said that the phenomenon did not at present exist, on account of the country's social values.

22. Regarding family guidance centres, such a centre had been established on an experimental basis, with psychologists, doctors and social workers available to assist families with their problems. On the basis of the outcome of the experiment, centres might also be established in towns other than Nicosia.

23. On the question whether any vulnerable groups existed, such as migrant workers, who did not enjoy the rights set forth in the Covenant, she said that the Committee had ratified all the relevant ILO conventions and had been found by the ILO Committee of Experts to comply with them. All its security, social assistance and medical health programmes and services were enjoyed by all groups of the population, without discrimination on any grounds whatever. All employed and self-employed persons had social security coverage, except for a few minor exceptions such as married women working on family farms, and unmarried females under the age of 35 living with their parents; however, social insurance protection was available to them as dependants.

24. Regarding a comparison of the situation in the Government-controlled areas and the occupied areas, she said that, while no accurate figures were available, the economic situation in the occupied areas was undoubtedly not good, owing to the policy of self-isolation pursued, and the quasi-annexation of those areas to the economy of Turkey. The real remedy lay in reunification of the Cyprus economy. Meanwhile, having regard to the welfare of the Turkish Cypriots, despite the fact that they were outnumbered by settlers and by the army, the Cypriot Government was providing economic, technical and other assistance to the Turkish Cypriots. Thus, electricity had been provided free of charge since 1964, water was provided free of charge, and gas supplies were subsidized by the Government. Turkish Cypriots were receiving 19.5 per cent of the annual assistance extended to Cyprus through UNHCR, which exceeded their proportion of the population. They also benefited from assistance extended to the Cypriot Government by such institutions as the EEC, the World Bank, UNDP, WHO and FAO. Furthermore, the President of Cyprus had proposed the total demilitarization of the Republic of Cyprus, and the allocation of the sums thereby saved to areas that had fallen behind economically, and especially to projects whose benefits would be enjoyed mainly by the Turkish Cypriots.

25. Various questions had been put regarding fertility rates, subsidization of day-care centres, and the rights of children and parents. She would refer such questions to the competent ministries, and up-to-date information on these matters would be submitted in writing at a later date.

26. Mr. SIMMA said that, in enumerating the remedies available to those who considered their rights as enshrined in the Constitution to have been violated, the representative of Cyprus had not distinguished clearly between civil and political rights and economic and social rights. Had there in fact been cases in which economic and social rights had been invoked before the High Court or administrative authorities?

27. Mrs. SAMOUEL (Cyprus) said that, to her knowledge, there had so far been no invocation of economic rights before the High Court.

28. Mr. WIMER ZAMBRANO drew attention to the discrepancy between the figures on per capita income provided by the Cypriot delegation and the rather lower figures supplied by official international sources. Was that perhaps attributable to a different method of calculating per capita income?

29. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO pointed out that her questions regarding the status of married couples had not been answered. She asked whether abortion was only permitted in cases of rape, or was also legal in other situations. Was it always left to the woman to decide to terminate the pregnancy?

30. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA, referring to paragraph 54 of the supplementary report (E/1986/4/Add.26), asked whether, in cases of prevention of thalassaemia, abortion was obligatory or voluntary.

31. Mrs. SAMOUEL (Cyprus) said she was unable to vouch for the accuracy of the figures concerning per capita income in Cyprus, but would verify them in due course.

32. With regard to matrimonial law, she said that the questions raised would be referred to the Ministry of Justice.

33. Regarding termination of pregnancy, in Cyprus no pregnancy could be terminated compulsorily, and it was basically up to the expectant mother to decide whether or not to have an abortion.

34. In the case of thalassaemia, she said that the decision to abort was again left to the mother. Due to public awareness of the incurable nature of the disease, there had been only one instance of non-termination.

35. The CHAIRMAN thanked the delegation of Cyprus for its Government's reports and the additional information provided in response to members' questions. The exchange of views in the Committee had proved extremely fruitful.

36. Mr. Anastasiades, Mr. Markides and Mrs. Samouel (Cyprus) withdrew.

ORGANIZATION OF WORK (agenda item 4) (continued)

37. Mr. ALSTON said that the practice followed at earlier sessions of proceeding directly to make concluding observations on the reports submitted by States parties had not given members sufficient time to formulate their final comments in a considered fashion, and he hoped that the new arrangements would provide for a period of reflection which would be beneficial to the reporting States. One possibility would be to allow an interval of one day between replies to members' questions and the concluding comments of members. Alternatively, the final comments could be postponed until the end of the session.

38. The CHAIRMAN pointed out that the concluding observations would be reflected in the Committee's summary records and would be communicated to the States parties.

39. Turning to the Committee's immediate agenda, he said that consideration should be given to the question of the allocation of 30 minutes for concluding observations, to Mr. Texier's proposal for a draft general comment on articles 22 and 23 of the Covenant, and to the preparation of a general comment on article 11 in the light of the general discussion on that article.

40. Mr. Simma, as Chairman of the pre-sessional Working Group, had proposed revised guidelines for the preparation of reports: the Committee might also direct its attention to those guidelines pending consideration of further reports submitted by States parties.

41. Consideration should also be given to the question of the non-submission of reports, a problem which had most recently arisen in the case of Iran.

42. The Committee might also wish to consider whether its report should be discussed as a separate item on the agenda of the Economic and Social Council, and also the form in which additional information provided by States parties to the Covenant should be submitted.

43. Mr. SIMMA said that there would be little point in discussing the draft guidelines and the question of additional information from States parties until the relevant texts were available in all the working languages of the Committee. He understood that translations of the additional information from France, the Netherlands and Zaire were expected to be available the following day.

44. The CHAIRMAN said he had gained the impression that the Committee wished to proceed with the proposal to establish a sessional working group to discuss draft general comments and later, when the documentation was available in all working languages, the general guidelines for submission of reports. He pointed out that membership of the working group would be open ended.

45. In connection with the consideration of the Committee's report by the Economic and Social Council, he said that one disadvantage of the decision to entrust discussion of the report to the Council's Social Committee was that that body was not entitled to summary records. It was important to ensure that the concerns of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were adequately aired in the Council.

46. Mr. ALSTON said that, while the Committee was of course a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Council, the issues which fell within its mandate were also discussed in both the Commission on Human Rights and the General Assembly itself, so that there was little likelihood that they would be ignored. However, it would be appropriate that the Committee's report should be made a separate item on the Economic and Social Council's agenda, and that provision should be made for the Committtee to be given a general briefing on recent developments, particularly in human rights treaty bodies, which were of relevance to its work. It would be useful if a member of the Committee were to be involved in preparing such a briefing, in consultation with the secretariat, in order to ensure that it was more than a mere formalistic enumeration of resolutions and recommendations adopted by the bodies concerned.

47. Mr. KONATE said that there was little real discussion in the Economic and Social Council on the substance of the Committee's report, of which the Council merely "took note". Efforts must be made to establish a genuine dialogue between the Council and the Committee if the latter's recommendations were not to be overlooked.

48. Mr. SPARSIS remarked that the Committee was isolated from other United Nations bodies. He would be in favour of including in the Committee's agenda a special item on relevant developments elsewhere in the United Nations system to be documented and annotated by a person designated by the Committee and supported the proposal that the Committee's report should be discussed by the Economic and Social Council as a separate item. The Committee's Rapporteur might introduce the report before the Council to provide a basis for discussion. That would assist the Committee in improving its work and would increase the impact of its activities in the field of human rights.

49. Mr. ALSTON informed the members that the Economic and Social Council secretariat had requested that the Committee's reports should in future begin with a section containing draft resolutions or decisions recommended for adoption by the Council. While he endorsed Mr. Konate's comments, the burden of introducing the Committee's report to the Council should not be placed on the Rapporteur, but on another member to be designated by the Committee.

50. The CHAIRMAN noted that two related points were at issue. First, it had been proposed that a separate item should be included in the Committee's agenda providing for an overview of actions within the United Nations system relevant to the Committee's work. If he heard no objection, he would take it that the members agreed to adopt that proposal.

51. It was so decided.

52. The CHAIRMAN, turning to the second point, invited the Committee to consider Mr. Konate's suggestion that it should promote dialogue with the Economic and Social Council. There appeared to be agreement that the Committee should designate a member to introduce its report to the Economic and Social Council as a way of inducing the Council to give it closer attention. In that connection, he would welcome members' views on a possible recommendation that the Council should consider the Committee's report in plenary session instead of in the Social Committee. Given that the report of the Human Rights Committee was considered directly by the General Assembly, such a step was the least that should be done.

53. Mr. ALSTON wondered what the practical implications of the last point mentioned by the Chairman would be. Since there was keen competition for the attention of the plenary Council, that might mean that the Committee's report would not be considered at all.

54. Mr. HOUSHMAND (Representative of the Secretary-General) noted that the plenary Council had summary records, whereas the Social Committee did not. That would be the only practical difference of treatment in his view. However, as he had mentioned at a previous meeting, the Economic and Social Council, at its first regular session in 1990, would be considering an item of crucial importance for the Committee, since the resolution establishing it, 1985/17, provided for a review in 1990 of the Committee's composition, organization and administrative arrangements. Given the importance of that review, it would be useful for the Committee to be properly represented, whichever Council body considered its report.

55. Mr. SIMMA noted that recent resolutions in which the Council had referred to the Committee were not very inspiring. He wondered whether the new procedure applicable to the Committee's report meant that the Council expected material formerly included in the body of the report to be presented separately in draft resolutions or decisions.

56. Mr. ALSTON said that, after a rather controversial beginning, the Committee had managed to establish itself without significant opposition and was now accepted on an equal basis with other United Nations treaty bodies. In his view it had achieved a measure of autonomy and did not need to seek approval by the Economic and Social Council on matters of substance. Draft resolutions and decisions should be limited to procedural and technical matters such as taking note of the 1990 review, the Committee's desire to be represented before the Council, etc. For the rest, the report should remain in its present form.

57. The CHAIRMAN said that, in the light of Mr. Houshmand's remarks, it was particularly important for the Committee's draft resolutions to indicate matters which the Committee wished to have considered by the Council, including the possibility that its report might be considered in the plenary. Mr. Alston's point about competition was well taken, but in his own view the report would receive attention in the plenary that was quite different to that which it commanded in the Social Committee. In requesting consideration by the plenary the Committee would also be reaffirming its importance in relation to the Human Rights Committee, whose report was considered directly by the General Assembly. One of the tasks assigned to the sessional Working Group might be to draft a resolution for submission to the Economic and Social Council recommending that the Committee's report should be considered by the plenary Council and that a member designated by the Committee should be invited to attend the Council's organizational session in May 1990. The draft might also mention the importance of the adoption of the rules of procedure which the Committee had submitted to the Council. He agreed with Mr. Alston that it was not necessary to seek the Council's approval on substantive issues.

58. Mr. SIMMA wondered whether it was realistic for the Committee to expect the Council to have time to consider its report in plenary.

59. Mr. HOUSHMAND (Representative of the Secretary-General) said that all human rights issues on the Council's agenda, with the sole exception of the Decade for Action to Combat Racism and Racial Discrimination, were now considered by the Social Committee. If the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights were referred to the plenary, a number of meetings would naturally be assigned for its consideration. If considered by the Social Committee, it would be taken up in the context of the overall human rights item. In that connection, he pointed out that the Council had decided systematically to forward the report of the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights to the Third Committee of the General Assembly, where the report was given in-depth and substantive consideration.

60. Mr. SPARSIS noted that in recent years the Committee had been discussing ways of affirming its identity and independence. He was concerned that, at the national level, there seemed to be a great deal of confusion between it and the Human Rights Committee and a lack of understanding of the importance of economic, social and cultural rights. If equal treatment of the two Committees was to be achieved at the international level, that confusion must be eliminated.

61. Mrs. JIMENEZ BUTRAGUEÑO endorsed Mr. Sparsis' remarks. Economic, social and cultural rights were assuming increasing importance in view of the current changes in international relations, and the time was ripe for the Committee to emphasize that fact.

62. Mr. TEXIER said that the confusion referred to by Mr. Sparsis reflected a general lack of knowledge of the monitoring bodies in all countries, i.e. a problem of information. Members were understandably concerned. However the two Committees dealing with the Covenants were fundamentally different in that the Human Rights Committee had been specifically established by the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which had an Optional Protocol that provided for individual communications to be considered by it. The Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights had emerged in a far less precise manner. In legal terms, he wondered whether alignment with the Human Rights Committee might not entail amending the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

63. Mr. ALSTON observed that economic, social and cultural rights were not taken seriously in the vast majority of countries. It was for the Committee to remedy that situation, and there were a number of ways of doing so. One was through consideration of States parties reports; in that respect it had made a good start at the current session with the excellent reports by Cyprus and the fruitful dialogue that had resulted. Another way, which he personally considered the most important, was through the elaboration of general comments addressing some of the major issues that remained vague, such as the crucial question of the nature of the legal obligations under the Covenant. He himself intended shortly to submit a draft elaborating on Mr. Texier's proposed general comment on articles 22 and 23 (E/C.12/1990/Misc.1) and a draft on the portion of article 11 concerning the right to food, and he urged other members to give attention to possible additional topics.

64. Regarding Mr. Texier's reference to the right of individual petition, Mr. Simma and himself had, quite coincidentally, already discussed the possibility of an Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights providing for some sort of petition system not necessarily the same as the one embodied in the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights. The Committee might designate a member to prepare a discussion paper on the topic for the following session, or ask the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities to look into it.

65. Mr. SPARSIS noted that the Committee's methods and procedures had evolved and that it had generally gained respect and confidence. Its work was just as important as that of the Human Rights Committee. As had emerged from the discussion of the Cyprus reports, the question of the invocation in national courts of rights provided for under the Covenant could be invoked was a crucial one. The Committee should pursue its efforts in that direction if it wished to change itself from a Committee of experts for experts to a Committee that spoke to laymen and had an international impact.

66. Mr. KONATE said that world public opinion should be made more aware of the Committee's activities by giving them greater prominence in the human rights information campaign. So far there had been only one somewhat academic contribution on the subject of economic, social and cultural rights and the lack of interest on the part of non-governmental organizations was evident. He

particularly endorsed Mr. Texier's suggestion in paragraph 6 of his draft general comment on articles 22 and 23 that the Centre for Human Rights should consider the possibility of organizing regional or national meetings in conjunction with the specialized agencies to achieve better implementation of the Covenant. A change in the common attitude which equated human rights with civil and political rights would enhance the Committee's standing generally.

67. Mr. GLAIEL agreed that, in most countries, human rights were regarded as being concerned with freedom of religion, freedom of expression, etc., and that economic, social and cultural rights were seldom mentioned. It would not be easy to reverse the recent decision of the Economic and Social Council that the work of all human rights bodies, including the Commission on Human Rights itself, should be discussed in its Social Committee. On the other hand, no practical purpose was served by producing an excellent report which was merely filed. He agreed with Mr. Konate that the Centre for Human Rights was partly responsible for the situation by its relative neglect of economic, social and cultural rights. Those rights should be publicized on an equal footing with other human rights in the world campaign, and the work of the Committee should be made better known.

68. Mr. SIMMA said that the United Nations approach to economic, social and cultural rights merely mirrored the difference in world-wide attitudes to such rights as opposed to civil and political rights, which had been recognized as important for centuries. Although economic, social and cultural rights were constitutional rights in many countries, there was little inclination to bring an action before the national courts to enforce them. It was up to the Committee to foster public awareness that they were more than paper rights. The Committee must change its methods of reviewing reports from States parties and elaborate comments.

69. Mr. ALVAREZ VITA said the problem was that there was as yet no consensus on the nature of economic, social and cultural rights as compared with that of civil and political rights. As a member of the Committee since its inception, he had always stressed that its reports should include the views of its members on jurisprudence. In Peru, for example, there had been a ruling on an environmental problem for which the records of the Committee had been used in order to apply international law directly. He agreed that the Committee should be working towards the eventual adoption of an optional protocol. He would be happy to discuss with other interested members of the Committee a draft text which had been worked out in Peru to enable individuals to have recourse to a supranational body which could well be the Committee. It would involve the possibility of holding one State responsible vis-à-vis another State. Hitherto the international obligation to co-operate had generally been passed over in silence and he welcomed the mention of international co-operation in the lists of issues currently being used by the Committee in its consideration of States parties' reports. The second-class status of economic, social and cultural rights had been indicated by the Economic and Social Council's delay in approving the Committee's rules of procedure. The Committee's work must receive greater publicity. A meeting of representatives of Geneva-based non-governmental organizations should be arranged at which the Committee's activities were explained. It was disappointing to see that only two such organizations had sent representatives to the Committee's current session, the dates of which had been altered especially to facilitate their attendance.

70. Mr. MARCHAN ROMERO said that he supported the idea of an optional protocol to the Covenant. The Committee should endeavour to increase its capacity to influence the far-reaching changes which were currently taking place in the world. The idea that some rights were more important than others was dangerous.

71. The CHAIRMAN said that the discussion had been helpful in assisting the Committee to formulate specific recommendations.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.